WRL News

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Hiroshima/ Nagasaki Activities 1981

By Grace Hedemann

WRL Locals across the country organized commemorative activities on August 6-9. **Pittsburgh WRL** held a vigil at Westinghouse's International Headquarters beginning a campaign to target Westinghouse's involvement in the nuclear arms race. The Local plans another action at Westinghouse on October 24th (Unilateral Disarmament Day) with other interested groups in the area. Special note: Charges were dismissed against Tim Sperry and Jesse Hunter appealing their defiant trespass conviction with a $300 fine and three days in jail (See *WRL News*, May/June, 1981).

Atlanta WRL held a vigil and sponsored a special event at Central City Park. Hundreds of paper cranes were folded to be sent to President Reagan as a call for peace. Petitions were signed. The media covered the activities. At the same time tax resisted money from the Tax Conversion Fund for Peace and Human Needs was given to four community groups.

Dallas WRL, in coalition with other groups, carried out a series of events. They conducted a special memorial service and held an all night vigil at the Pantex Plant (final assembly facility for *all* nuclear weapons) in Amarillo. Then at Carswell AFB Open House, the group conducted a religious service calling for a halt to the military build up and displayed a banner. Finally, the Local closed the weekend at Dallas City Hall with a puppet show and balloon release.

Triangle WRL wrote letters to local ministers urging them to include the poem about Sadako Sasaki and the paper cranes in their August 9th church bulletins. The Local sponsored a folk memorial service on Nagasaki Day.

catholic Action/WRL on August 6th held a commemorative ceremony at Honolulu City Hall in front of a monument noting the "Sister City" relationship between Hiroshima and Honolulu. Following the formal ceremony a smaller group began a three day fast and vigil, staying day and night in front of City Hall. On August 8th,

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Reagan Peace Initiative— The Neutron Bomb

by Ed Hedemann

President Reagan's go ahead for the production of the "neutron bomb" represents a dangerous escalation of the nuclear arms race. This is not just because the Russians will feel compelled to build their own neutron bombs, or even because the neutron bomb is the ultimate capitalist weapon—killing people while sparing property.

The greatest danger of the neutron bomb is that it makes nuclear war more thinkable. Pentagon war planners have historically been reluctant to use nuclear weapons because there has always been a big gap between conventional weaponry and nuclear weaponry. The neutron bomb is considered by many to be a "bridge" between conventional and nuclear weaponry, thereby lowering the threshold to all out nuclear war. Officials in both the Carter and Reagan Administrations have expressed the opinion that nuclear war can be "limited" or "winnable." This frame of mind *decreases* the reluctance to initiate the use of nuclear weapons. There is *no reason* to believe that nuclear war can be limited, or that "winning" is a meaningful concept in a nuclear war. Such thinking makes one wonder if Pentagon and Administration officials have taken too many rides in Disney's "Fantasyland," or have received lifetime passes to "Star Wars."

There is every reason to believe that nuclear war cannot be limited. How could anyone believe that if the USSR were losing a war against the US, they would not trot out their big bombs, especially after neutron bombs were introduced, and *vice versa*?

Even militarily, neutron bombs are of

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Aftermath of NYC Mobilization for Survival anti-neutron bomb demonstration during lunch hour on August 13. Demonstrators dressed as buildings blocked traffic on Fifth Avenue in front of Rockefeller Center for about 15 minutes, before police arrested 13. Victim with her mouth wide open is WRL Chairwoman, Norma Becker. About 150 attended the rally preceding the civil disobedience. *Photo by Grace Hedemann*

Israel

By David McReynolds

Because the issue of Israel is so controversial, let me explain this is my own position, offered as part of a continuing dialogue on the Middle East. I know of no single question which is more likely to result in resignations, protests, and general anger than a critical article on Israel.

The reasons for this are easy to find, impossible not to view with sympathy. Jews have been an oppressed people for the better part of 2,000 years, trapped by history which they did not make, into a role they did not desire. They have been scapegoats and victims, enduring both systematic discrimination and repeated outbursts of violence, culminating in the Holocaust of World War II which took the lives of six million Jews—one out of every three Jews then alive on the planet.

It is not surprising that Jews are sensitive to any criticism of Israel, and tend to confuse that with an attack on Jews. If the Jewish community was not easily disturbed, it would suggest they were totally indifferent to the past. War Resisters League counts Jews not only among its current leadership, but among its founders. The League played an outstanding role in the 1930's in protesting Hitler's policies and in aiding refugees seeking entrance to the United States. But it is this very debt we owe, philosophically, to the Jewish tradition of justice, a tradition which is so deeply a part of our roots, our awareness of the ancient Judaic cry, "Justice, Justice Shalt Thou Pursue," which now compels me to address in a direct and blunt way recent Israeli actions.

We have always opposed terrorism, and have been emphatic in rejecting the use of terrorism by the PLO. What, then, can we say of the Israeli air strike at Beirut, where 400 civilians were killed? This is an act of State Terrorism which exceeds anything the PLO has done. What are we to say of the Israeli pre-emptive strike at the Iraqi nuclear power plant?

One must note that while WRL has said repeatedly that the State of Israel has a right to exist, and we have called on the PLO and the Arab states to recognize that right, it does not follow that the State of Israel has the right to exist on any terms it may set.

Nor does it follow—sobering thought—that the State of Israel, unlike all other states, is immortal in its present form. Given the current departure of Jewish Israelis for Europe and the United States, and the increase of the non-Jewish Israeli population because of the higher Arab birthrate, it will be impossible, within one or two decades, for Israel to be both a specifically Jewish State and a democratic one in which Arabs are free to vote. Already Israel finds itself in the appalling position of an occupying force on the West Bank, where it has ruled over another people since the 1967 war and shows no sign of meeting the conditions of the Camp David Accord. If Begin had the right to engage in terror to drive out the British and establish a Jewish National Home, can he logically deny to the PLO the same right in regard to Israeli control over the West Bank? Can American Jews, committed to a deep belief in justice, continue to give virtually uncritical support—or, in fact, any support—to a Jewish State which increasingly assumes the characteristics of an outlaw in terms of international law, which now counts as its only two firm allies South Africa and the United States, and which supplied arms to the Somoza government until it was overturned and is today engaged in the heavy supply of arms to the junta in El Salvador?

Is there not a moral problem that Israel grants to any Jew in the world the automatic right to settle in Israel and become a citizen, even though that person had been born ten thousand miles away, while Palestinians cannot return to the homes of their fathers, from which they were driven by the violence of the Irgun when the State of Israel was founded? These questions cannot easily be turned aside, and they press hard upon us now with recent Israeli actions.

Is it time for Begin to realize that his bombing of Beirut—not to speak of his relentless and appalling attacks for more than a year on populated areas of Lebanon—has now erased any moral distinction between the Israeli government and the PLO? The last barrier to dialogue is surely gone. More important, when Begin asks rhetorically if we would urge him to sit down and talk to people committed to the destruction of Israel, our answer is yes. When you have a war, you do not negotiate with your friends but with your enemies. That is what negotiations are about. And Begin is unlikely to enter those negotiations so long as he continues to have a blank check for his actions from the major Jewish organizations in this country.

Finally, I would ask that Begin keep his hands off the six million victims of the Holocaust. I am appalled at what I consider his obscene effort to base current policies on the death of the six million. Since the majority of Jews that survived the Holocaust did not choose to go to Israel—however much they defend the right of other Jews to go there—one must assume that the six million who died did not authorize *any* State to speak on their behalf. More urgent, one must insist on the fact that the Holocaust is a matter that concerns all humanity, not Jews alone. First, because the six million were sisters and brothers of us all, and only after that were they Jews. True, they were chosen for death solely because they were Jews, but the tragedy of their death is not that they were Jews, who are not worse or better than others, but that they were innocent of any crime. True also that Black Americans were subject to slavery solely on the basis of color, but our reason for shame over slavery is not that the slaves were Black, but that we had made slaves of our brothers and sisters. Alas, suffering may transform individuals, but it does nothing positive for the mass of people. From the death camps of Hitler has come a State which engages in torture, in pre-emptive strikes, and in terrorism. Swiftly vanishing is the dream of the Zionist pioneers, who had thought to build a utopia in the desert.

One must, in the face of recent Israeli policy, suggest that unless that policy radically changes, the future of Israel is bleak beyond words. We speak bluntly because to fail to speak directly will be no service at all to the people of Israel, Jews and Arabs alike, who are not served by those who would approve every action, but who instead most urgently need friendly critics.

David McReynolds is a WRL National staff member.

New Book from WRL

#1447 The Polish Summer (July-Sept. 1980) by Robert Pollet

Workers victories and popular nonviolent civilian defense. Published by War Resisters International, London, England.

.....44pp., $2.00

WRL Statement of Purpose

The War Resisters League affirms that war is a crime against humanity. We therefore are determined not to support any kind of war, international or civil, and to strive nonviolently for the removal of all the causes of war.

I support this statement and wish to enroll as a member of the War Resisters League.

Signature _____

Name _____

Address _____

City_____State_____Zip _____

send to
War Resisters League
339 Lafayette St.
New York, NY 10012

False Currency in Northern Ireland

By Eileen Egan

(The following is based on remarks on August 8, 1981 at a New York rally marking the 10th Anniversary of Internment in Northern Ireland and memorializing the hunger strikers dying in the Maze Prison, Belfast.)

Since 1971, when the Special Powers Act went into effect in Northern Ireland, over 300,000 homes have been searched without warrant. Of the persons arrested in a given year, two-thirds were never charged with any crime, according to an official tribunal report. Cold figures can give little idea of the experience of those who have had to live under such Emergency laws.

It was the internment policy, directed chiefly against the minority in Northern Ireland, which contributed mightily to the upsurge of violence in Northern Ireland. The media of the world took notice when at the conclusion of a Civil Rights march protesting internment, 13 unarmed young people were gunned down. This was "Bloody Sunday," January 30, 1972. British paratroopers, ostensibly a neutral force to keep the peace, opened fire on the demonstrators and kept up a sustained fire of half an hour. It is a conviction in Derry that the aim was to flush out IRA Provisionals who were expected to respond with answering fire. The lethal ploy did not provoke any violent response but instead activated a chain of counter violence.

The two communities of Northern Ireland, one coming from a Protestant matrix, the other from a Catholic one, are trapped by history, by fears of what each has in mind for the other. The violence of the past decade, committed only by the extremists, the diehards, of both communities, has only tended to polarize them still further. The members of the Provisional IRA, most of them in their early teens when the present surge of violence began, are fired by revolutionary fervor for speedy and palpable results, an end to centuries of discrimination and a sort of second-class citizenship. Certainly they can draw on Ireland's history of violent resistance to spur them on—the Risings in generation after generation, always followed by merciless executions.

The last words of those about to be executed, gathered in a collection, *Speeches from the Dock*, keep alive with unforgettable eloquence the courage of those who died for the freedom of their country. One of the last recorded documents is a speech of the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, "This contest of ours is not, on our side, a rivalry of vengeance, but one of endurance. It is not they who can inflict most, but they who can suffer most, will conquer." Sentenced to prison by a court martial whose authority he did not recognize, MacSwiney told his judges that if he were sent to prison, he would refuse all food. His death came in Brixton Prison after 74 days of fasting.

What can one say to young men who condemn themselves to death as did MacSwiney, for a principle? Their principle is recognition of their special category as political prisoners by the acceptance by their jailors of five demands. These include civilian clothing, refusal of prison work and free association. The tradition of free association comes from the long terms given the original IRA men in the early 1920s. This was the time when Irishmen, in enforced leisure, learned their language and left prison fluent in the Gaelic tongue.

Is the recognition of their special category worth a single life? There is no doubt that they are in a special category, since they are not convicted under due process of law, nor were their savage sentences consonant with their crimes. Of the hundreds of prisoners belonging to the general group of IRA Provisionals, 20% were convicted of capital crimes. Others have received sentences of 15 years for being found in possession of an unloaded gun. Is the British Empire the same opponent for which their ancestors suffered and died? Certainly the British Lion which once straddled the globe was a formidable opponent. It is now a mangy old animal. Is it worth yet another death?

The death of the hunger strikers in the Maze Prison has more than one tragic result. First, there is the death of the young men themselves, a death of incredible torture. Secondly, there is the intensified polarization of the two communities and the opportuity for demagoguery by inflamed extremists on both sides. And thirdly, there is the eclipse in the news media of green shoots of inter-community cooperation and peacemaking that have been growing into sturdy plants.

The Other History

In the same way as death and violence captures news coverage today, so it has captured the pages of Irish history. A strong strain of nonviolent struggle has perhaps done more to change Ireland's history than the bloody "Risings." The other history of Ireland, still to be written, would describe the crucial role of the "hedge schools." These were voluntary schools, set up in provisional shelters, a hut, a room back of a barn, or, in fair weather, under a hedge, to teach the Irish language, Irish culture and the rudiments of Latin to cement identification with a proscribed church. Even where schools were provided by the colonial regime, the people went to the hedge schools. They might not have realized that they were practising nonviolent revolutionary resistance at its best, the support of parallel structures which delegitimized imposed structures. In the course of time, they displaced the rejected structures. Daniel O'Connell, known as the "Liberator," spoke in the strongest terms against violence, telling his followers that a "thousand ill passions are generated when man falls by the hand of his neighbor. The perpetrators of murders become obdurate, unrelenting and inhuman." It was noncooperation by Irish peasants against an oppressive landlord, Captain Boycott that brought a new word into the English language and helped inspire the noncooperation of Gandhi. Michael Davitt, himself a victim of eviction from his family farm and of the brutalities of a British jail, championed nonviolent, organized agitation against the unjust landholding system.

False Currency

There can be little hope for a cessation of distrust and hatred between elements of the two communities in Northern Ireland while diehards on both sides put their trust in oppression and violence. The number of those who have rejected violence absolutely and completely, not simply as a tactic but as a principle of life, is growing. They accept the statement of Simone Weil, who out of the crucible of war and limitless violence, asserted, "Pain and suffering are a kind of false currency passed from hand to hand until they reach someone who receives them but does not pass them on." In Northern Ireland, that false currency has been passed from hand to hand for too many generations.

Eileen Egan is an Associate Editor of the Catholic Worker and is on the Executive Council of Pax Christi. She is also a contributor to a recent collection, War or Peace, *published by Orbis Books.*

1982 Peace Calendar Available

Dancing in the Streets...this is the theme of the 1982 Peace Calendar and Appointment Book now available from the War Resisters League. Included in the calendar are the words of 56 songs by Lennon, Parton, Marley, the Temptations, Presley, Seeger, and dozens of other singers who have made a difference in our lives.

Dancing in the Streets is a desk calendar (5½ x 8½) with a page for every week and, on facing pages, a song for every emotion. The date pages can be removed, leaving a bound volume for your permanent library.

This handsome and informative calendar is ideal as an inexpensive gift. Order today!

$5.00 each, four for $18.

Training Program Descends on Wall Street

—Dow Jones Industrials Average Falls—

A flaming car crash, "paralyzing fear" on Wall Street, and CBS evening news TV cameras were all—unplanned—elements of the 9th annual WRL Training Program for Organizers.

The *planned* aspects of the program revolved around 40 sessions focussing on organizing skills, philosophical discussions, and various movement issues. The program began at the conference center in rural Deerfield, Massachusetts. And the final third of the program was held in New York City. Several sessions were linked to preparation for the finale of the program: "soap box" street speaking on Wall Street.

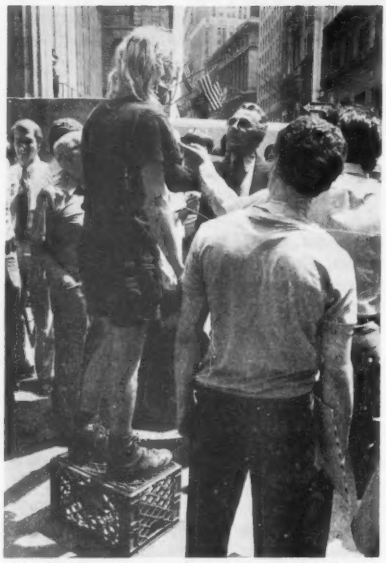
Considerable apprehension developed, as the two weeks (July 30–August 14) ticked off, over having to get up and talk to a potentially hostile crowd. A role play held in Deerfield was designed to prepare participants for the worst. During this role play a string of "typical disrupters" (played by members and interns of the Traprock Peace Center) and an uncertain crowd of program participants milled around and commented as each person gave his/her 5-minute presentation. While some felt the roleplay was one of the best sessions, others felt it created greater fears. However, predictably, some of the role play "characters" turned up for real at Wall Street (e.g., several "what-about-Russian" persons and a Bible-toting preacher).

Despite the apprehensions, the Wall Street speaking was a smashing success. The event occurred during a Friday lunch hour and attracted as many as 30 people at any one time. Afterwards, participants commented that it was inspiring, instructive, confidence-building, and they actually *enjoyed* it.

In previous years the issues which generated the most interest in organizing ranged from Vietnam to nuclear power to the draft. This year the draft (and a growing interest in disarmament) was a prime motivator for a number of people, including three non-registrants. As a result, a camera crew from CBS network evening news paid a visit to the training program in Deerfield to interview two of the non-registrants. CBS also filmed part of the "political music" session to put their story into context. The segment is expected to be aired right after the second series of non-registration indictments are handed down (by the end of August).

During the evening of August 6, most of the trainees joined the Hiroshima Day ceremony organized by the Traprock Peace Center. The event came to a close with the floating of lighted candles down a nearby river. As participants watched from a bridge above the river, a passing car rear-ended another car slowed by the event. The first car burst into flames trapping the demonstrators between a 5-foot high wall of flames and the bridge railing. Though no one was hurt, for a few seconds there was alot of concern that the car would explode or run over someone.

There were 8 women and 9 men from 14 states (from as far as California). Ages ranged from 20 to 50. Four were from WRL local groups. Some had a good deal of organizing experience, while others had done very little organizing. Patt Milam, a mother of two from Arkansas, anti-nuclear activist, as well as officer in the local PTA and United Methodist Women, was warned by a friend about the WRL program because it had a session on "socialism" (which probably means communism), and a session on "guerrilla theater" (which probably has something to do with guerrilla warfare, doesn't it?).



Jim Walker during his turn on the "soap box." Photo by Grace Hedemann.

The training program was coordinated by Grace Hedemann with the able assistance of Ed Hedemann and Susan Pines. Among the 28 resource people, were WRL staff members Igal Roodenko, Karl Bissinger, and Ralph DiGia, as well as WRL EC members Wendy Schwartz and Murray Rosenblith, and WRL NC members Joanne Sheehan and Beverly Woodward. James O'Barr and Sarah Pirtle not only hosted the stay in Deerfield, but were resources in the "street speaking role play" and "political music" sessions.

The transition from a tranquil and communitarian Deerfield to a frantic and disunited New York City was traumatic for most, and virtually everyone was exhausted by the intensity of the program. However, participants agreed that the program and experience of working with organizers from across the country was empowering and exhilarating.

Bob Henschen, organizers' program participant from Houston, taking his turn speaking to Wall Street crowd, August 14. Seated behind him are 4 other organizers with dollar bills tied around their eyes. Photo by Grace Hedemann

International Nonviolent March for Demilitarisation

By Neal Bowen

One thousand anti-militarists have come together near Beilen in northeast Holland for the 6th International Nonviolent March for Demilitarization. The "march" this year is actually a camp where participants from 10 countries live and plan actions in the area during the two-week (August 1–14) life of the anti-militarist village.

It is appropriate, being in Holland where nearly everyone rides a bike, that this year's is a bicycle march. With actions pondered as far away as Hengelo (50 km), marchers will pedal to the sites, reassemble and demonstrate.

The camp is organized into about 70 affinity groups. Although many were formed before the march, most of those arrived with space for a few people from another country. Additionally, the many who arrived alone or in pairs were given general training and formed into affinity groups. Thus, most groups are international.

The affinity group is the basic decision making unit of the camp. Proposals for action are presented to them for discussion and decisions. Each group then sends a spokesperson (*not* a representative) to an intermediate council, based on language groups, where points of agreement are discovered. Each intermediate council then sends two people to the speakers council where the structure of an action emerges and an Action Coordinating group is formed—if consensus is reached. Otherwise, outstanding points return to affinity groups for further consultation.

The first three days were devoted to training and the formation of affinity groups. A trainers collective of 18 from three countries, including the United States, provided some form of training to over 700 people. Workshops in confrontation and self-defense and consensus were in particular demand, with general training, first aid, strategy, meditation, public relations and political theater also given.

On Tuesday, August 4, 600 participants cycled 40 km to Coevorden, proposed site of an American munitions depot, for a day of actions. The demonstrators assembled just outside of town and marched in three groups along different paths, ultimately converging on the Town Hall. There, a meeting with the mayor asked that he refuse the depot. After laying a barbed wire wreath at a monument to General van Heuyt—a former resident of Coevorden who was a murderous Governor General in Malaysia—the marchers returned to the market square for a speech from "General Haig" assuring the security of the area. The speech was followed by the flight of several Pershing missiles and a subsequent die-in.

As of this writing (August 6), further actions planned include a four-day fast for some (August 6–9), a blockade of the changing of the guards of a nuclear weapons depot in Havelteberg August 7, a women's action at The Hague August 8, the planting of hundreds of crosses at three military bases August 9 and a direct action at the Holland Signaal Factory—one of Europe's largest defense contractors.

The march has attracted immense media attention and local interest. An Open Night for residents of Beilen, August 5, was attended by 300 local residents. Twenty-five Dutch soldiers visited the camp one night, engaging in amicable and useful dialogue. Many of them expressed opposition to nuclear weapons. Unfortunately, repeated nighttime visits from local youth-fascist groups have necessitated a night watch over the camp.

Still, an exuberant and optimistic international anti-militarist village currently exists in northeast Holland, trumpeting the themes of nonviolence and peace through personal action.

Neal Bowen is the WRL intern to the War Resisters' International office in London.

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little use except as an offensive weapon, or a weapon which would give battlefield commanders more flexibility to initiate a nuclear response. Supposedly, these weapons are to stop a Warsaw Pact tank assault, since they have more tanks than NATO. What the Administration doesn't point out is, the US has three times as many *very accurate* conventional anti-tank weapons with a greater range than the tanks' weapons as the Soviets have tanks. As a result tanks are virtually useless in a major land war in Europe.

Furthermore, neutron bombs are only useful against heavy concentrations of tanks; otherwise thousands of these bombs would have to be used, damaging much western Europe property and killing many civilians, defeating their stated advantage of limited property destruction and civilian deaths. It has been acknowledged that such Warsaw Pact tank concentrations would only be in eastern Europe. Once crossing into western Europe the tanks would fan out. So neutron bombs would be militarily most "useful" as an offensive weapon in eastern Europe. In addition, since blast effects are minimal, thereby destroying few tanks, soldiers in the tanks knowing they've received a lethal dose of neutrons, would fight on more furiously until they drop (hours or days later). Since the neutron radiation dissipates rapidly, the tanks could be outfitted with new tank crews.

One additional comment, movement people have made much of the "kills people, not property" reputation of neutron bombs. We have to be careful not to get trapped by that logic into somehow giving the impression that regular nuclear weapons are therefore preferable. The key point of our opposition to these weapons is how they make nuclear war more likely.

Ed Hedemann is a WRL National staff member.

Vital Statistics of the Neutron Bomb

The neutron bomb, euphemistically called the "enhanced radiation weapon" by the Pentagon, has been on the drawing boards at least since the late 1950s. It was in 1977 that President Carter announced the decision to go ahead with production, only to shelve it a year later, because of the international uproar it created.

Physically, the neutron bomb is a thermonuclear weapon ("hydrogen bomb" or "fusion bomb") with the outer blanket of uranium 238 removed. Uranium 238 is normally not fissionable except under bombardment of fast neutrons, which are released during a fusion reaction. With the uranium 238 shell removed from the bomb, the fast neutrons released by the fusion reaction are not absorbed, but continue until they hit their target.

Fast neutrons have little effect on inanimate objects, but on living tissue the results are catastrophic. Neutrons attack the central nervous system, resulting in immediate nausea, diarrhea, and convulsions. Depending on distance from detonation, those affected may die within a few hours or 2 to 3 months of respiratory failure, delirium, or coma. Those who don't die are likely to contract some form of cancer (particularly leukemia).

Neutron bombs are intended for battlefield use and have the blast equivalent of 1 kiloton of TNT (the Hiroshima bomb was about 13 kilotons of TNT). They are to be deployed in 8-inch artillery shells (range of 10 miles) and short range (85 miles) Lance missiles. The blast and heat of the bomb are expected to destroy everything within 300 yards of detonation. The radiation kills most living things within a mile.

WAR RESISTERS' INTERNATIONAL: OUR WORLD-WIDE COMMUNITY

by Dorie Wilsnack

Our daily news is a series of stories about violence around the world: prisoners in Northern Ireland; apartheid in Southern Africa; Cruise missiles destined for Western Europe; nuclear waste disposal in the Pacific. Violence seems to be the major form of control for the people in power on this planet, and an all-too-popular form of resistance for those who are oppressed. It's enough to make you decide not to get out of bed in the morning.

Besides being a depressing way to begin the day, however, this is not a complete picture of world affairs. The news media may not provide much coverage, but there is a growing international movement of nonviolent activists—in some places large enough to be influential. Though we are still mostly a symbolic presence, it is accurate to say "we are everywhere."

It is very important to refer to this movement in terms of "we." Our American habit is to consider networks that spread outside our own boundaries as "they" but we miss out on a lot from that kind of isolation. It may be a new concept to many of us, but as we work for peace and disarmament in our local communities, we are contributing to a truly international movement. Realizing that we have comrades and counterparts in other countries can provide us with valuable emotional and practical support.

The form and substance to this pacifist element in the world appears most often in communication networks which encourage activists in one country to vocally support the efforts of activists in another: for example, Amnesty International, WILPF, the International Fellowship of Reconciliation, and the War Resisters' International There are also international strategies which bring these networks and non-affiliated activists together, such as the organizing that is preceding the United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament.

War Resisters International

For members of the War Resisters League, our international "home" is the War Resisters International. We are all officially members of WRI, and we have a lot to gain from this affiliation. Using that inclusive pronoun "we" again, WRI-identified activities can give us a lot to be proud of: In Ireland, "we" publish a newsletter, *Dawn*, which seeks to encourage a nonviolent approach to the struggles in Northern Ireland, and to keep the issues of nuclear weapons and nuclear power in Ireland alive on the public agenda. In Southern Africa, "we" provide support structures for the white draft resisters who refuse to participate in their government's colonial wars. In Western Europe, "we" are helping to build a grassroots movement against the deployment of U.S. (NATO) missiles that has brought real pressure to bear on key Western European governments. It may seem strange to the ears and egotistical to say that "we" did these things, but if you also consider the notion that your actions to convert a local nuclear weapons facility, or your support for a U.S. draft resister are done as part of an international rather than just American peace movement, the image created is actually a humble one. Our power and effectiveness can only come when we link ourselves to an international network; we cannot do it as one country alone, nor can we operate as the movement's vanguard.

The War Resisters' International has been operating as a network of pacifists since 1921. Initially its focus was to support "war resisters" in the most literal sense: that is, those men who refused to go to war. This definition has expanded with the years to include anyone and everyone who resists war and militarism. The WRI's analysis of the causes of war has also matured over the years and this shows in the move to encompass economic oppression, racism and sexism in the meaning of resistance to war.

Just as it was in 1921, WRI continues to put major program emphasis on resisting the draft. This includes both encouraging countries to recognize the rights of conscientious objectors and supporting those who choose to resist the whole practice of conscription. WRI has also carried out a strong disarmament focus for many years: pressuring for the 'reconversion' of military facilities to peaceful purposes, exploring ideas for nonviolent civilian defense, and organizing against the business of conventional arms and the nuclear arms race. The most recent major program development has been around the issues of women and militarism. Beginning with conferences, and from there creating educational material and coordinated international actions, WRI is examining the connections between sexism and militarism, and looking for strategies that link feminism with nonviolence.

This latest program area has produced one of the major controversies brewing in the organization. Should we be trying to halt all violence in society, both personal and political, or should we limit our focus to militarism alone? Another major argument which goes on among the different countries is whether we should be concentrating our attention on supporting individual resisters, keeping our nonviolent principles clear, or pursuing strategies which are more capable of challenging the draft system but will entail political compromise as we work in coalition with others. These controversies are not new to War Resisters League participants, but on an international scale, they provide even more thought-provoking perspectives.

WRI maintains a few specific projects which keep the network alive and create a nonviolent voice in international circles. Prisoners for Peace is a project to send letters of support to people in jail around the world for their nonviolent principles. Unilateral Disarmament Day is held every October 24th; WRI organizations in many countries plan coordinated activities on this day to make the public aware of the importance and viability of unilateral disarmament. The *WRI News* comes out bi-monthly and includes both updates on international peace activities and a forum for WRI members to debate and discuss strategies and political ideas. WRI hosts a triennial conference for its members to share ideas and plan programs.

How You Can Be Involved

You can do a number of things to make your membership in WRI a livelier part of your peacework: subscribe to the *WRI News* and sell issues through your WRL literature program; submit news items and longer idea-pieces to the WRI office in London for publication in the *News;* make a War Resisters' International banner to carry in marches and demonstrations; print "Member, War Resisters' International" at the bottom of your group's stationery; adopt a "sister-organization" from among the other local groups in the WRI network.

If you are interested in learning more about the War Resisters' International, there are two people working with WRL in the U.S. who can provide you with ideas and support. Neal Bowen is working in the WRI London office as an intern and Dorie Wilsnack is the WRL representative to the WRI Council. Their addresses are below. Both of these people are ready to act as a liaison between War Resisters League activists in the United States and the international network of activists in the WRI. You are encouraged to give them a call or drop them a note.

It does make a difference to the spirit to know that there is an international movement resisting violence in the world, that we are not isolated in our local communities. Active involvement in the War Resisters' International is one way that you can be a more active part of that movement.

Dorie Wilsnack, c/o WRL/West, 85 Carl St., San Francisco, CA 94117.
Neal Bowen, WRI, 55 Dawes St., London SE 17 1EL England.

Mean Things Happening in This Land

(H.L. Mitchell, $10.95, hardcover, 352 pages)

H.L. Mitchell—known within the socialist and Southern labor movement simply as "Mitch"—has written a book filled with a history I was never taught, the kind of history which, even as it carries us backward in time, helps us to believe it is possible for us to move ahead, with courage, grace, and humor. Mitch was the co-founder of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union and I am delighted to say he is alive and well and lecturing regularly (and single-handedly got me on the ballot in Alabama in 1980—where the Socialist Party ticket polled a thousand votes, the highest total of any state except New Jersey).

I grew up thinking that once you went South of the Mason/Dixon line you better abandon all hope. Later I was to learn of the powerful interracial Populist movement late in the 19th Century—a movement crushed by the rise of Jim Crow. (Racism and anti-Semitism are always useful tools to divide the poor.) But Mitch's Southern Tenant Farmers Union wasn't set up in the glorioius days of the Populist Movement—it was set up in the terrible days of the Great Depression, in the racist and embittered Deep South. If Mitch is alive today it isn't only because he has courage—he also knew when to run and which road to take out of town. A kind of shrewd "poor man's cunning" shows through in this book, which, as it recreates the history of a failed union, also recreates the history of a region and a time. Figures such as Norman Thomas come alive for us, and some of the sad sectarian fights of those days between the Socialist and Communist Parties.

Most of all one can feel the oppressive summer heat, the dust of the cotton fields, the risks of organizing, and the great drama that is always present when the poor organize for their own survival. (The book is marred, unhappily, by Michael Harrington's foreword, in which he makes an entirely gratuitious and inaccurate attack on the Socialist Party, seeking to charge it with supporting the Vietnam War, when the record will show it was Harrington who supported the war. I'm sorry to insert this note in a review, but sorrier still that Harrington used the foreword to an excellent book to try to re-write history.)

Southerners will rejoice in Mitchell's book, which goes far to redress the historic anti-Southern bias of history as we in the North were taught it.

—David McReynolds

WRL Regional & Local Offices

WRL/Southeast, 604 West Chapel Hill Street, Durham, NC 27701 (919/682-6374).
WRL/West, 85 Carl Street, San Francisco, CA 94117 (415/731-1220).

ALABAMA

Birmingham WRL, 567-B Tyler Loop Road, Pinson, AL 35126 (205/681-7034).
Mobile WRL, P.O. Box 6416, Mobile, AL 36606.

CALIFORNIA

Inland Empire WRL, 1336 North Wall Avenue, San Bernardino, CA 92404 (714/889-3170).
Southern California WRL, 866 ¼ E. Kensington Road, Los Angeles, CA 90026 (213/629-2998).

COLORADO

Foothills WRL, 3024 Ross Dr. #A-4, Ft. Collins, CO 80521 (303/482-9641;482-0369).

CONNECTICUT

Norwich WRL, P.O. Box 1093, Norwich, CT 06360 (203/889-5337).

FLORIDA

Central Florida WRL, P.O. Box 6208, Orlando, FL 32853 (305/896-0703).

GEORGIA

Atlanta WRL, 1225 Cameron Court N.E., Atlanta, GA 30306 (404/378-3237).

HAWAII

Hawaii WRL/catholic Action, 1918 University Avenue, Honolulu, HI 96822 (808/949-1210).

ILLINOIS

Oak Park WRL, 645 North Taylor, Oak Park, IL 60302 (312/386-0192).

INDIANA

Direct Action Committee/WRL, 704 First Avenue, Evansville, IN 47710 (812/423-5209)
Muncie/Ball State WRL, P.O. Box 401, Student Center, Muncie, IN 47306 (317/289-6710).

MICHIGAN

Detroit WRL, 1542 W. Alexandrine, Detroit, MI 48208 (313/833-3197).

MISSOURI

Ozarks Area WRL, 626 East Normal, Springfield, MO 65807 (417/864-4078).
St. Louis WRL, 962 Warder, St. Louis, MO 63130 (314/726-4662).

NEW JERSEY

Monmouth County WRL, P.O. Box 131, Fair Haven, NJ 07701 (201/899-4383; 747-0566).
New Brunswick WRL, P.O. Box 1895, New Brunswick, NJ 08903 (201/356-6083).

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque WRL, 201 Pine S.E., Albuquerque, NM 87106 (505/243-6169).

NEW YORK

New Paltz WRL, P.O. Box 83, New Paltz, NY 12562 (914/255-8627).
New York City WRL, 339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012.
Rochester WRL, 713 Monroe Avenue, Rochester, NY 14607 (716/244-7191).

NORTH CAROLINA

Triangle Area WRL, 604 West Chapel Hill St., Durham, NC 27701 (919/682-6374; 489-1553).

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia WRL/WTR, 2208 South Street, Philadelphia, PA 19146 (215/545-4626).
Pittsburgh WRL, 5406 Bartlett Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15217 (412/422-0377).

TEXAS

Dallas WRL, 2701 Woodmere, Dallas, TX 75233 (214/337-5885 night).

VERMONT

Lamoille Peace Coalition/WRL, P.O. Box 43, Johnson, VT 05656 (802/635-2618).

WEST VIRGINIA

Morgantown WRL, 912 ½ Monongalia Avenue, Morgantown, WV 26505 (304/292-9678).

WISCONSIN

LaCrosse Area WRL, 614 South 16th St., LaCrosse, WI 54601 (608/782-2136).

Atlanta WRL collecting paper cranes on August 7th to send to President Reagan as part of Hiroshima/Nagasaki activities. *Photo by David Pascale*

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the focus shifted to the military—with the fasters and friends moving to the gates of Pearl Harbor's West Loch nuclear weapons storage facility.

At West Loch 40 people marched to the gates and held banners reading: "IN MEMORY OF HIROSHIMA AND NAGASAKI" . . . "WEST LOCH IS CLOSED." And indeed the base did close...at least for the hour the group vigiled. The guard on duty shut the gates and padlocked them for good measure upon seeing the group. Even the military, for a time, was willing to join in the commemoration of the tragic events of 1945.

Oak Park WRL, in conjunction with other local peace groups, organized a memorial service at Scoville Park in front of its war monument. Participants gave testimonies about what Hiroshima/Nagasaki meant to them, and a religious service followed. Oak Park WRL invites WRLers in the Midwest to attend the Feminists Against Militarism Conference on September 11, 12 & 13 at the Circle Pines Camp in Delton, Michigan. For more information, contact Oak Park WRL.

Birmingham WRL received excellent publicity in the *Birmingham Post-Herald* with a photo on the front page of WRL member, Patricia Hefner, holding a WE NEED A ERA placard. WRLers joined the National Organization of Women (NOW) sponsored ERA Countdown Campaign rally. A number of WRL Locals joined similar demonstrations on June 30th.

Grace Hedemann is a WRL national staff member.

Lamoille Peace Coalition/WRL joined the July 4th Morristown, Vermont parade with their peace banner and dove after having been refused the right to participate by the VFW sponsors. The police at the last minute OKd the local's participation, and the banner received cheers throughout the parade! The banner and dove were carried again by Lamoille during the Washington to Moscow, Vermont March on August 7th in Montpelier.

Greg Green

1961–1981

Greg Green of Iowa City died August 12 after being struck by a car. He was a key organizer of the Nebraska-Iowa feeder route of the Continental Walk for Disarmament and Social Justice in 1976. A service was held on August 17 at which some of Greg's poems and political writings were read.

Nominations Solicited for Executive and National Committees

WRL members may nominate candidates for the Executive and National Committees.

There will be 5 openings for the Executive Committee and 6 for the National Committee. Only persons in the New York City area should be nominated for the EC since they must be able to attend monthly meetings in this area. Members outside the New York City area may be nominated for the NC which meets twice a year. The person you nominate for the NC should come from your own area: West, Midwest, South or East.

Though any WRL member may submit a nomination, nominations by less than five members are subject to the approval of the National Committee as a prerequisite on the ballot. Please submit nominations to the National Office by the November 15 deadline.

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WRL is the U.S. branch of the War Resisters' International, a pacifist organization with affiliates in 18 countries.

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WRL News (from 1967 on) is available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106.